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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Guantanamo - Trial in Paris
PARIS - Wednesday, July 05, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Guantanamo - Trial in Paris

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

French radio and TV news are reporting Pyongyang's missile test launches yesterday as one of today's top international stories, with a focus on U.S. and Japanese concerns about North Korea's intentions. French print coverage is sparse, so far limited to reprinted Agence France Presse dispatches that quote Pentagon, State Department and Japanese government sources, and note confusion as to whether the missile was a Taepodong-2. All stories also note the emergency session of the UN Security Council called for this afternoon. As of 9:30 a.m. local time nothing yet about official French government reactions. "Warning or provocation?" wondered the privately owned RTL radio journalist this morning. One of them could have reached American soil the report said adding that President Bush has declared the launch as an act of "defiance to the International community" and that Russia had condemned this launch. Europe 1 radio noted President Bush's "firm" reaction to the news but also said that as a sovereign country North Korea is justified in testing its missiles. Europe 1's 9 am newscast noted that Tokyo has called for a Security Council meeting this afternoon. The radio's U.S. correspondent, Francois Clemenceau said that Washington did not appreciate the fact that the launch coincided with July 4 celebrations.

Wednesday's deadlines are dominated by the World Cup soccer semi-finals with France playing against Portugal this evening in Munich.

All papers on Tuesday reported on the possible merger of Nissan-Renault with General Motors on Tuesday. Left-of-center Liberation's editorial wonders if "gigantisms" is the way to go. France 3 television aired a report about the possibility of an alliance between General Motors, Nissan-Renault. The report weighed the pros and cons: with General Motors' 10 billion dollars in losses last year, and Nissan-Renault's 7 billion euros in profit. The journalist said the alliance would create a group owning 25% of the market share. "Attractive, but risky", he concluded. Right-of-center Le Figaro today notes on its front page that the French government has hesitations concerning a GM-Renault alliance. The editorial in the Tuesday edition of Les Echos asks: "Can a French automobile manufacturer that has been trying to break onto the North American auto market for years afford to rebuff the advances of the sector's world leader?... That the Americans cannot find, at home, a group capable of buying out GM is a testament to the state of the Detroit company that has become an idol with feet of clay."

Left-of-center Liberation's headline story is devoted to the trial in Paris of the six former Guantanamo detainees and the facsimile of a diplomatic telex published by the daily that proves that the French DST and DGSE intelligence agencies "illegally" interrogated the prisoners at Guantanamo in 2002. Liberation's story also notes that two of the defendants' lawyers are claiming that this interrogation "illicitly contributed to providing information in the case against the detainees." (See Part C)

Right-of-center Le Figaro of Tuesday reports on how "camouflage is a method of survival" in Baghdad. The report interviews several Iraqis, including a female interpreter for the U.S. Embassy, about their attempts to blend into crowds in the city. A Christian woman now wears the Islamic veil so as not to stand out. Another man has bought doctored identity papers that no longer show his Shiite tribal affiliation. "We are surrounded by ghosts," says one. No one knows who the enemy is anymore. Under Saddam, "you got killed if you mixed in politics; today, whether you are Sunni or Shiite, if you are secular or religious, you are dead. The enemy is everywhere," says one man.

Right-of-center Le Figaro reports that "despite the fact that the man [Ben Laden] is still worth 25 million dollars, the unit that has been in charge of his capture, dead or alive, has been closed... and

the members of this unit have been reassigned to new, more general jobs within the anti-terrorist section of the American intelligence agency. The Ben Laden cell had been in operation for ten years, well before the head of al Qaeda launched himself onto the front of the terrorist stage... The closing of the unit, called Alec Station, reflects the fact that Ben Laden no longer represents the same type of threat as he once did... For the first head of this unit, Michael Scheuer, closing Alec Station is a mistake... to the New York Times he said that the decision 'undermines our actions against al Qaeda...' But another CIA source told Le Figaro that the CIA is realizing that al Qaeda is not a hierarchical and centralized organization but one that inspires a certain ideology. The article goes on to mention the START program initiated by the Department for Homeland Security.

Right-of-center Le Figaro reports that "Discovery Lights Up the American Sky" with the successful launch yesterday of the space shuttle. "America could not dream of a more beautiful display of fireworks to celebrate the 230th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Guantanamo - Trial in Paris

"Breach"

The editorial by Jean-Michel Thenard in Liberation (07/05): "France, which defends international justice, has always been opposed to the detention center of Guantanamo that exists outside of the law. A sort of Bermuda Triangle of Human Rights where the American Administration has renounced its own values and laws as well as those of the international community. All in the name of the fight against terrorism. But France's protestations did not prevent Paris from entering right into the system and sending intelligence officers to Guantanamo to question the French prisoners there. To accept to send representatives to the government to a place that is outside of any legal framework is tantamount to colluding with what one is condemning." STAPLETON